

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

## Regular Meeting

Thursday – April 14, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.

The Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 5:00 P.M., via ZOOM.

**Commission members present were:** Dorothy G. Meriwether, Commissioner District #1 and Richard L. Parent, Jr. Commissioner District #2.

**County staff present included:** County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Finance Director Kathy Robinson and IT Director Mike Dean.

**Budget Committee members present:** Chair Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns, Charles Grover Bob Duke and Nick Lapham.

*Absent: Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner District #3, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Jail Administrator Bob Wood, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, District Attorney Natasha Irving, Communications Director Robert Coombs and EMA Director Ray Sisk.*

**Others:** Vera Roberts

### Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting – Agenda

via ZOOM

Thursday – April 14, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.

- I. I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 Public Comment**
- III. 5:02 Appointment to the District 3 Budget Committee Seat**
  - 1. Appointment By Budget Committee
  - 2. Confirmation of Appointment By Commission
- IV. 5:03 Approve Minutes** (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Commission)
  - 1. Minutes of Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting of March 17, 2022.
- V. 5:05 Supplemental/Amended Budget Review**
  - 1. Further Review of ARPA Projects – Municipalities & Non-Profits and Knox County Departmental List.
- VI. 5:45 Final Vote on all ARPA Projects (in preparation for Public Hearing)**
  - 1. Municipalities & Non-Profits and Knox County Departmental List.
  - 2. Airport CARES ACT & AIP Projects.
- VII. Adjourn**

### I. Meeting Called to Order

The April 14, 2022 Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting was called to Order by Budget Committee Chair Shawn Levasseur and Commissioner Chair Dorothy Meriwether at 5:05 P.M.

**II. Public Comment:**

Chair Levasseur asked if there was any Public comment.

None

**III. Appointment to the District 3 Budget Committee Seat**

1. Appointment by Budget Committee

2. Confirmation of Appointment by Commission

- *Charles Grover made a motion to appoint Vera Roberts to the District 3 Budget Committee Seat. Nick Lapham seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Parent made a motion to confirm the appointment of Vera Roberts to the District 3 Budget Committee Seat. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- Administrator Hart stated once Vera Roberts has been confirmed then he will send this to the Bureau of Elections and they will provide an oath. Once received, she will need to sign and be sworn in by a Dedimus Justice. Once this takes effect, then she will be able to participate as a Budget Committee member and finish out the term which will expire December 31, 2024.

**IV. Approve Minutes** (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Commission)

1. Minutes of the Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting of March 17, 2022.

- *Charles Grover made a motion to approve the amended Minutes of the Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting on March 17 2022. Nick Lapham seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Parent made a motion to approve amended the Minutes of the Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting on March 17 2022. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

**VI. Supplemental/Amended Budget Review:** Further Review of ARPA Projects- Municipalities, Non-Profits and Knox County Departmental List.

- Administrator Hart stated the list that was sent out was the same list that was distributed on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The only exception is we removed the \$190,000 for the brick replacement/repair as this will be funded through another source. The discussion at the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting was that we were going to start at the top of the list, below the Stipends, get through those items and possibly finish with the Stipends.
- A Budget Committee member stated in the reading of the minutes is that Commissioner Pohlman proposed and it was voted on by the Commissioners to do away with the Stipends.
- Chair Levasseur stated it was proposed to do away with the Stipends for Communications, Corrections and Sheriff's Office but no action was taken by the Budget Committee. It was implied that new ideas would be brought up at the next meeting.
- A Commissioner stated this topic is still up for discussion. We will have the discussion but it will be at the end of the list. She and a Budget Committee member both suggested

having a discussion about the Stipends first which would then let us discuss actual amounts. If we run through the list first (everything but the Stipends) we will be left not knowing whether if we will have to cut something else. This is at the digression of the Budget Committee on what they want to do.

- A Budget Committee member stated he would prefer we did the Stipends first, as we could make different decisions if we knew we didn't have to allocate almost a million dollars to the Stipends.
- Chair Levasseur asked who wanted to make a motion on how we approach the items.

- *Nick Lapham made a motion to go through the items in the order that they are listed and start with the Stipends. Charles Grover seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

- A Budget Committee member stated the Commissioners did vote unanimously in the minutes to suspend the Stipends. The discussion on the table and according to the minutes is the fear that you can't do it for everyone so we should not do it. The second point that came up during that discussion is that we need to keep something in reserve in case something comes up in the future and we need money.
- A Commissioner stated until she votes officially everything is up for change. She had a lengthy conversation with an employee and her attitude has changed. She was unaware of the fact that out of 119 employees, and to pay five (5) departments covers eighty (80%) percent leaving twenty (20%) of the employees to be left out. That simply is not fair. She does believe the direction the Budget Committee was discussing about giving a Stipend across the board is the better direction.
- A Budget Committee member spoke and said he does not agree that it should be on a percentage basis.
- A Budget Committee member asked if we vote on this is this the final vote?
- Chair Levasseur stated no, we still have to get the Public Notice out.
- Administrator Hart stated what we have really done so far was to narrow this list down to a dollar amount. We haven't really voted on any dollar amounts. The plan most likely would be to vote on each item, and you could change that up until you vote the final number to send it to the Public Hearing. When we get the final vote and send it to the Public Hearing that's the final number and that's the number you vote on at the Public Hearing. You can change it up until then.
- A Budget Committee member asked when does it become a final vote.
- Administrator Hart stated if we do not make it through the list tonight we we'll have to move the "final vote" agenda item to another meeting. So any votes you take until that time are not final votes.
- A Budget Committee member stated to be clear, you are suggesting Stipends for approximately 120 County employees for an amount of \$990K, correct.
- A Commissioner spoke and said that was not her proposal. She was suggesting everyone would get the same amount and that amount has not been determined. If we were to pay everyone the \$200/wk. in the County it would be in the vicinity of \$1,237,600.00. A couple different options have been put out there.
- A Budget Committee member suggested instead of the \$200/wk. we should be giving employees' \$150/wk. vs getting nothing. He feels \$1.2 million is a lot of money for bonuses. We could lower the amount and expand it to all the employees.
- A Commissioner said so you are saying you're supporting giving \$200/wk. to all of the employees across the County.
- A Budget Committee member stated he does agree.

**Department/Agency:****Discussion: Personal Protective Equipment – Building Maintenance**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Building Maintenance request for Personal Protective Equipment in the amount of \$6,050 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 1 (Nick Lapham)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Building Maintenance request for Personal Protective Equipment in the amount of \$6,050 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

**Discussion: Microwave - Communications**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Communications request for a Microwave in the amount of \$300,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Communications request for a Microwave in the amount of \$300,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

**Discussion: Scanner - Corrections**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Corrections request for a Scanner in the amount of \$180,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns and Nick Lapham)*

*Against: 1 (Shawn Levasseur)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Corrections request for a Scanner in the amount of \$180,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

**Discussion: HVAC - Corrections**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Corrections request for HVAC Phase 4 in the amount of \$196,400,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Corrections request for a HVAC Phase 4 in the amount of \$196,400 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was*

**Discussion: Doors – Corrections**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Corrections request for eighty-four (84) Doors in the amount of \$840,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Corrections request for eighty-four (84) Doors in the amount of \$840,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

**Discussion: Digital Communications – Corrections & Sheriff**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Corrections & Sheriff request for Digital Communications in the amount of \$34,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Corrections & Sheriff request for Digital Communications in the amount of \$34,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

**Discussion: Tent - EMA**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the EMA request for a Tent in the amount of \$20,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the EMA request for a Tent in the amount of \$20,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

**Discussion: Audio/Video - IT**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the IT request for Audio/Video in the amount of \$10,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the IT request for Audio/Video in the amount of \$10,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

**Discussion: Watercraft – Sheriff**

- A Commissioner wanted to ask the Sheriff if he still not want the \$300,000.00 for the watercraft the he originally asked for. To buy the watercraft builds in between \$30-\$60K a year in future budgets for maintenance for the watercraft per year. If you took the \$300,000.00 boat off that would more than pay to give everybody the Stipend.
- The Sheriff spoke and stated he appreciates the efforts of the Budget Committee but his crew is waiting to see what is going to happen with the Stipends. They could easily go elsewhere and be paid a lot more. The working conditions here are very good and they appreciate that. At the end it does come down to what we all do and we all work for money. There will be a difference if we do not at least do that for now, and then put it in the Budget conversation as we go forward. This is an opportunity to help bridge that gap to get us through contract negotiations. He will lose Deputies and that is the fact. He is willing to give that up if it helps giving to the Deputies.
- *Bob Duke made a motion to keep the watercraft for \$300,000.00 on the list. Roger Peabody seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- A Budget Committee member stated he thinks the watercraft was falling victim to a personnel issue about the Sheriff worrying about staffing the County. He understands and appreciates what he is trying to do. Knox County is one of the few Counties that serve a number of islands. He would like to make the case that if anything happens on one of those islands we have no means to get there other than an airplane, which is not something you can get quickly. This is a capital item, and this is a one and only time that we as a County have the ability to make that investment. It is understood there are annual costs associated with having a watercraft. Spending the \$300,000.00 is valuable.
- A Budget Committee member did stated that we already cut \$190,000.00 out of this section so this will more than cover the Stipends.
- A Budget Committee member stated the boat is a life safety issue.
- The Sheriff has a Coast Guard 50 ton license, the Deputy on North Haven is prior Coast Guard and a Detective that is prior Coast Guard.
- *A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Sheriff's request for a Watercraft in the amount of \$300,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Sheriff's request for a Watercraft in the amount of \$300,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 1 (Commissioner Parent)*

*Against: 1 (Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This resulted in a split vote*

## Private Sector

### Discussion: Consultant – EMS & Fire

- A Budget Committee member stated what are they looking for this consultant to do?
- Administrator Hart stated about 3-4 years ago the County through EMA funded a fire study. A fire study was done with all the fire agencies in Knox County. At this time everything was looked at that was associated with fire departments, and they came back with a recommendation to work on the Knox County Mutual Aid Association. We were approached by So. Thomaston Board of Selectmen requesting that we look at EMS because EMS is struggling state wide with coverage and personnel. The agreement was we would look at updating the fire study that was done and this time included EMS.
- *Roger Peabody made a motion to add the EMS & Fire request for a Consultant in the amount of \$20,000.00. Bob Duke seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the EMS & Fire request for a Consultant in the amount of \$20,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the EMA & Fire request for a Consultant in the amount of \$20,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

### Discussion: Stipend – Municipal Emergency Management Agency

- A Budget Committee member will not support this but wanted to bring it to table so others could discuss.
- A Budget Committee member asked is this contingent on the municipalities that participate?
- Administrator Hart stated that was discussed at the previous meeting when Ray discussed this. The Budget Committee put the option of having the municipality match up to a certain dollar amount. There was not a final vote just a suggestion.
- A Commissioner stated according to the Budget procedure the Commission submits to the Budget Committee a request. This was a request from one of our Department Managers. It really is beyond the Budget Committee's authority to come in and change something as radically as to cut it in half and then say contingent upon a municipality matching what the County gives. We should not get into a discussion about completely changing the formula based on the Budget Committee.
- A Budget Committee member stated he recalled it was originally proposed by Commissioner Pohlman.

- A Budget Committee member stated in years gone by that it was discussed it is not the Budget Committees role to determine salaries and payments of employees. We can approve a Budget.
- A Commissioner stated this is very different as we are talking about Stipends and not salaries. What we are talking about is not for County employees it is for local town EMA Directors.
- A Budget Committee member stated he does not feel should be getting into individual towns and offering money to pay employees.
- A Budget Committee member asked if there was money to be found in the County Budget to do this.
- A Budget Committee member stated he agrees with the other Committee member and prefers to keep this separate. This is beyond the scope of what we should be looking at with ARPA money.
- *Nick Lapham made a motion to add the Municipal Emergence Management Agency's request for a Stipend in the amount of \$9,000 to the ARPA list. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Municipal Emergency Management Agency's request for a Stipend in the amount of \$9,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 0*

*Against: 6 (Randy Stearns, Charles Grover, Nick Lapham, Bob Duke, Roger Peabody and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item did not pass***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Municipal Emergency Management Agency's request for a Stipend in the amount of \$9,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 1 (Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 1 (Commissioner Parent)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item resulted in a split vote***

### **Discussion: Building Maintenance & Cleaning – Hagan Property Mgmt.**

- **No discussion**

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Hagan Property Management's request for a Building Maintenance & Cleaning in the amount of \$29,687 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Hagan Property Management's request for a Building Maintenance & Cleaning in the amount of \$29,687 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

### **Discussion: Stipends –Corrections**

- A Budget Committee member asked what is it these folks are doing for us medically.
- The Sheriff stated these are the five (5) people that were with us through this whole Covid pandemic.
- A Budget Committee member stated these are private sector people, are they independent or do they work for an employer.
- The Sheriff stated they work for an employer.
- A Budget Committee member stated so we would be paying a private company ARPA money.
- Finance Director stated that some employees have stated that some employees are not being offered the \$2,500 when this is being offered to an outside agency. Of the five (5) not all are currently employed by us right now.
- *Roger Peabody made a motion to add the Corrections-Medical's request for a Stipend in the amount of \$12,500 to the ARPA list. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Corrections – Medical's request for a Stipend in the amount of \$12,500 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 0*

*Against: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Nick Lapham, Randy Stearns and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item did not pass*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to add the Corrections – Medical's request for a Stipend in the amount of \$12,500 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 0*

*Against: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item did not pass*

### **Municipality/Non-Profit Agencies:**

#### **Discussion: Food Programs – Come Spring Food Pantry**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Come Spring Food Pantry's request for a Food Programs in the amount of \$100,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to add the Come Spring Food Pantry's request for a Food Programs in the amount of \$100,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was approved*

#### **Discussion: Affordable Housing – Isle au Haut**

- A Budget Committee member wanted to say that he feels this should be the Towns responsibility not the County. This is a single municipality that is benefiting from this.
- A Commissioner agreed with the Budget Committee member. She said it sounded from their presentation that they had their own Resource Development Corporation (ICDC) that has been very effective.
- *Bob Duke made a motion to add the Isle au Haut's request for Affordable Housing in the amount of \$175,000 to the ARPA list. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- A Budget Committee member wanted to say that he feels this should be the Towns responsibility not the County. This is a single municipality that is benefiting from this.

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Isle au Haut's request for Affordable Housing in the amount of \$175,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 3 (Bob Duke, Randy Stearns and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 3 (Nick Lapham, Roger Peabody, Charles Grover )*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item resulted in a split vote*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to add the Isle au Haut's request for a Affordable Housing in the amount of \$175,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 0*

*Against: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item did not pass***

### **Discussion: Affordable Housing – Knox County Homeless Coalition**

- *Nick Lapham made a motion to move the Knox County Homeless Coalition in the amount of \$4,100,000.00 to the end of the list for discussion. Bob Duke seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Parent made a motion to move the Knox County Homeless Coalition in the amount of \$4,100,000.00 to the end of the list for discussion. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- A Budget Committee member stated we had a request from someone for \$4 million and we are already down to \$2 million available, so how does that affect the project. Are we only going to half fund a project? Is it even feasible to think they can move forward?
- The Sheriff stated that there is a number of different projects, so they will be able to direct it into what's most needed and how they can apply it.
- A Commissioner stated of the original \$4.1 request, \$400,000.00 of that is for Isle au Haut. She did hear that there was a significant amount of assistance that has gone towards the Madeline Lane Project from another source. We will give them what money we have left and they will know how to best use it.
- A Budget Committee member agrees but would like to get an accounting of what they would use the remaining dollars that we budget for them so we are not just voting on a blank check.
- A Commissioner suggested to come up with a rough number, and send it to the Homeless Coalition to tell them this is the number we are looking at; then can you give us a general idea of what your priorities are before our final vote.
- A Budget Committee member stated he has a problem with this. He agrees with the homeless issues that we have, but what he finds frustrating and offensive is their presentation. They came to us with a laundry list and expected us to prioritize their list. We cannot do that, we do not know what their needs are. He is concerned that if we just send them a check they have not prioritized anything. We asked them specifically on eight (8) or nine (9) items what are your priorities, and they said we haven't figured that out yet. He is uncomfortable with sending them a check and telling them to use their best judgement.
- A Commissioner stated her understanding of their request was they have identified essentially six (6) areas of concern in terms of homelessness that addresses specific problems. She doesn't feel that they were telling us to decide and prioritize for them.
- The Sheriff stated he understands the point of the Budget Committee and feels it is fiscally responsible of them to say this is our plan for the \$2.3 million. It's also responsible of us to ask the question what you will do with the \$2.3. It is a fair question to ask.
- Finance Director Robinson stated if we feel that in concept that we want to award money, not knowing what we can offer them until we do a final vote on all the other projects because this will be the last one that will get the balance. She would recommend that once we have a firm number that then we ask them for a presentation and a list of priorities.

- A Budget Committee member stated his problem is we are going to ask them to give us a break down on \$2.3 or whatever amount, well how do we know the priorities that those projects they give us is the most important? They are the ones that know not us.
- A Budget Committee member stated if the Budget Committee and Commissioners are in support of giving the balance of the ARPA funds to the Homeless Coalition, if we could agree on that tonight then the next step would be a message back to the Homeless Coalition and let them know the amount and ask how this will be used.
- A Budget Committee member stated this was the 800 lb. gorilla in this whole thing. He was thinking about bringing the amount down to \$1.2 to align with the other agencies.
- A Budget Committee member feels they are all saying similar things. The Finance Director needs to get back to us with some accounting of what it is we have to revisit so we can get a number for what we have already spent. As a group we need to decide how much of that balance are we willing to contribute towards Knox County Homeless Coalition, and we have every right to ask them how they will spend that money.

**A consensus vote was taken on the motion below:**

- *Bob Duke made a motion that the Budget Committee supports giving the balance of the accounted funds to the Knox County Homeless Coalition, by the Finance Department, after the already approved dollars that have been approved by the Budget Committee and Commissioners. This will be subject to their submission of a list of projects to be funded with that remaining balance. Roger Peabody seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 1 (Randy Stearns)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

**A consensus vote was taken on the motion below:**

- *Commissioner Parent made a motion that the Budget Committee supports giving the balance of the accounted funds to the Knox County Homeless Coalition, by the Finance Department, after the already approved dollars that have been approved by the Budget Committee and Commissioners. This will be subject to their submission of a list of projects to be funded with that remaining balance. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

**Discussion: Food Programs – MCH, Inc.**

- No discussion

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the MCH, Inc. request for a Food Programs in the amount of \$60,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to add the MCH, Inc. request for a Food Programs in the amount of \$60,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

#### **Discussion: Operational Support – SASSMM**

- No discussion
- A Budget Committee member stated he missed the presentation so did not know enough about it.

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine request for Operational Support in the amount of \$160,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 1 (Randy Stearns)*

***This item was approved***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to add the Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine request for Operational Support in the amount of \$160,000 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

#### **Discussion: Knox Clinic – Town of Thomaston/Midcoast Health Net**

- A Budget committee member asked if this was affiliated with the one that is in Rockland that just opened this Spring.
- A Budget Committee member stated no. This is an organization that is looking for another home. Thomaston is providing space and some services. It is a great location because it gets to the islands, and the areas in Knox County that have very little medical services.
- A Commissioner stated the Knox Clinic has been around for fifteen (15) years. They are serving the uninsured medical and dental and this will allow them to expand their services. They are hoping to expand this to include and work with the local Paramedics in Thomaston.
- A Budget Committee member asked if this was a one-time expense.
- A Budget Committee member stated yes it would be a one-time expense.
  
- *Charles Grover made a motion to add the Knox Clinic – Town of Thomaston/Midcoast Health Net’s request in the amount of \$1,200,000.00 to the ARPA list. Nick Lapham seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Knox Clinic – Town of Thomaston/Midcoast Health Net’s request for Operational Support in the amount of \$1,200,000.00 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 6 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to add the Knox Clinic – Town of Thomaston/Midcoast Health Net’s request for Operational Support in the amount of \$1,200,000.00 to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Against: 0*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item was approved***

#### **Discussion: Ambulance – Town of Union**

- A Budget Committee member stated that he feels it’s the municipality’s responsibility.
- A Commissioner wanted to remind all that our EMS Director who serves So Thomaston, St. George and Thomaston was quite supportive of this because when an ambulance goes down you are in trouble. This would be centrally located and there has been much discussion and mutual aid agreements.
- A Budget Committee member agreed. He doesn’t see ARPA money from the County going to individual Towns when all those Towns received their money already and they

have made their decisions on how they would like to spend it. He doesn't find this as a County obligation.

- A Budget Committee member agrees with a couple other members. He has done some checking and it was never a solid meeting of the minds between Directors. Until he sees some sort of a plan saying "this is the way it's going to be for everybody" I will not be in agreement.
- A Budget Committee member asked this is an ambulance for the Town of Union right. He thought Union did not have an ambulance but Sterling Ambulance provided care for them. When did this change?
- Administrator Hart stated Union has always had an ambulance service. Sterling just provided the service to Union when needed.
- Communications Director Coombs stated that sterling was covering in the area of Hope and in that area. They backed up Union when Union didn't have a crew together or was on another call.
- A Commissioner asked is there a shortage of ambulances in the Town of Union and surrounding Towns?
- A Budget Committee member stated it's not so much the shortage of rigs but shortage of crew to man them. Every service around is struggling.
- Administrator Hart stated that this could be something that comes out of the Fire and EMS study when that's done that it might be a recommendation to have a second ambulance I one or more communities. It could also be that they look at regionalization. They may suggest having less ambulance departments and have it on a more regional basis. You never know, they could say the County needs to provide the ambulance service.
- ***Bob Duke made a motion to add the Ambulance for the Town of Union's request in the amount of \$275,000.00 to the ARPA list. Charles Grover seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.***

***A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Town of Union request for Ambulance in the amount of \$275,000 to the ARPA list.***

*In favor: 1 (Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 5 (Nick Lapham, Randy Stearns, Bob Duke, Roger Peabody and Charles Grover)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item did not pass***

***A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to add the Town of Union request for Ambulance in the amount of \$275,000 to the ARPA list.***

*In favor: 1 (Commissioner Parent)*

*Against: 1 (Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item resulted in a split vote***

### **General Discussion:**

- A Commissioner asked if there has been a tabulation of what has been approved so far.
- The Chair stated he has been keeping a running tabulation of what has been approved so far. Approved is \$4,462,756.00.
- A Commissioner asked is that the balance of what we have approved for tonight?

- Finance Director Robinson stated she has been keeping a total but there are a couple of items that were a split that she believes will stay on the list. We will not know if they will stay on until the next meeting. Her recommendation would be to vote on the Knox County Homeless Coalition. If the project and concept is approved the balance would be available to them whatever that balance happened to be. Right now she has it at \$2.3 million but that will be variable because we are still going to have final votes and some administrative costs. Once we get through the final vote then we can award them “up to a definite amount” let’s say \$1.5 million with a future commitment to whatever balance Knox County has in ARPA goes to their organization. She will need to confirm the wording but it’s more of the concept if you agree with the project then agree with the balance.
- A Budget Committee member asked Finance Director Robinson what are the other items that are outstanding.
- Finance Director Robinson stated that when she talks about “outstanding” there will be audit costs the next X amount of years that we have this project going. We will have administrative costs that are going to happen on a yearly basis, which right now we cannot project how much that is going to be. So we will have to leave some money to pay for those but we can still award what we do not need that we have held aside.
- A Budget Committee member stated he thought the Finance Director referred to other items that were still pending.
- Finance Director Robinson stated that a couple of items tonight were split they were not a definite yes or no. So in that case she did not remove them off the tally list. We will not have a definite yes or no until our meeting next week. The *(inaudible)* for \$9,000 the Commission was split on that, Isle au Haut was a split decision, the Stipends were a split from the Commission and we do not have a Commission final on the ambulance. Where these are straw votes they cannot be taken off the list as they still have to go forward for a vote.
- A Commissioner stated that according to her records both Commissioners present said no on the Stipends. It was split by the Budget Committee and if they had their full quota they might not be able to override a vote so that still is unsettled.
- A Budget Committee member stated we had a request from someone for \$4 million and we are already down to \$2 million available, so how does that affect the project. Are we only going to half fund a project? Is it even feasible to think they can move forward?
- Communications Director Coombs wanted to bring up something back on the Private Sector in the EMS & Fire for \$20,000.00; if it helps he will take that money for his employees and place it in to his Budget or take it out of this year’s Budget to cover that \$20,000.00. We need to support our people. The RCC Budget will cover that and open the \$20,000.00 up.
- A Budget Committee member asked Director Coombs you have an extra \$20,000.00 kicking around in your Budget that is not being planned on and you would be willing to spend that on something else?
- Director Coombs stated that if it means helping my people and keeping people here then yes I can figure it out.
- A Budget Committee member asked why did you ask for the money if you don’t have a plan for it.
- Director Coombs stated we always have built in things and this item could be put in his Budget for next year.
- A Commissioner stated we are being bogged down on a \$20,000.00 expenditure and what the Finance Director is saying is that we have a whole lot of flexibility within the request for the Homeless Coalition and we need to focus our attention on that.

## **Department Stipends:**

### **Discussion: Stipends**

- A Budget Committee member stated to be clear, you are suggesting Stipends for approximately 120 County employees for an amount of \$990 some odd thousand correct.
  - A Commissioner spoke and said that was not her proposal. She was suggesting everyone would get the same amount and that amount has not been determined. If we were to pay everyone the \$200/wk. in the County it would be in the vicinity of \$1,237,600.00. A couple different options have been put out there.
  - A Budget Committee member suggested instead of the \$200/wk. we should be giving employees' \$150/wk. vs getting nothing. He feels \$1.2 million is a lot of money for bonuses. We could lower the amount and expand it to all the employees.
  - A Commissioner said so you are saying you're supporting giving \$200/wk. to all of the employees across the County.
  - A Budget Committee member stated he does agree.
- *Bob Duke made a motion that the Budget Committee approves the amount of \$994,532.00 for Stipends. Roger Peabody seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee to approve the amount of \$994,532.00 for Stipends.*

*In favor: 4 (Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham and Shawn Levasseur)*

*Against: 2 (Randy Stearns and Charles Grover)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This item was passed*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Commission to approve the amount of \$994,532.00 for Stipends.*

*In favor: 1 (Commissioner Parent)*

*Against: 1 (Commissioner Meriwether)*

*Maybe: 0*

*Abstained: 0*

*This resulted in a split vote*

### **General:**

- Administrator Hart asked are we at the next meeting going to vote on the items that were a split vote. How are we getting to a number because we are not at a number right now?
- A Budget Committee member stated the number that will be arrived at will be after our final votes.
- Administrator Hart stated right now we do not have an actual number, so we will have to schedule another meeting to have a final vote to approve all the numbers. Then we will have to send that Budget to a Public Hearing, provide all the information to the Towns, and then post it. This will mean we will have to have a second meeting.

- A Commissioner stated you have to have the Public Hearing when you have given the municipalities the final numbers.
- Administrator Hart stated the time frame for the Charter; you have to have a Notice ten (10) days before the Public Hearing. There are a couple of publications that are not real good about working with us on the deadline. With those few if we miss it we miss it they do not bend.
- A Commissioner stated procedurally the Budget Committee and Commission would be amenable when we split vote. She understands that if there is a split vote then the override comes from the bottom line number. At our next meeting if we could just go with the Budget Committees number.
- A Budget Committee member stated he thought it would be important for all to go on record now with the Homeless Coalition. He thinks the next meeting will be expedited really quickly.
- Finance Director Robinson stated the whole ARPA funds do not need to be awarded right now. There could be some that can be held back to make decisions at a later date if the consensus is to go that way.
- A Budget Committee member asked if the Public can view the meeting right now.
- A Budget Committee member stated yes.
- A Budget Committee member asked is it the intent of the group to leave a certain sum of money on the table or to spend all the money.
- Chair Levasseur stated he already suggested setting a sum aside for the future.
- A Budget Committee member stated he would like to spend as much of it as possible now because that may prevent us from going through this process again.
- A Commissioner asked Administrator Hart if we do not delegate where all the money is going with this go around, if we save some money for a future date will we all have to meet again to approve that.
- Administrator Hart stated we could leave some money and during the 2023 Budget when we have meetings on that we could use some of that money to fund a particular item. We just have to stay within the timeframe of what is required to approve a project and expend the funds. If there is any left we have until 2024 to pick a project and expend it by 2026.
- A Budget Committee member suggested that Finance Director Robinson prepare the numbers so we can see what we have to make a decision on next week and then what's left over we should be able to decide if we want to keep a small cushion. Then we can vote on that and do that and the balance goes to the homeless.
- Chair Levasseur stated we do have to have an amount set aside for administrative purposes.
- Finance Director Robinson stated a couple variables we can't figure at this point. It depends on how much we award, what agencies we award to and how complex their projects are. We have not gone through our first audit just awarding Stipends to even be able to estimate how much audit will be from now until 2026.
- A Budget Committee member stated it would be prudent to keep a little money under the rug for any unforeseen things that may come up.
- A Budget Committee member stated we should be able to spend these funds now and move on with our normal Budget process.
- A Budget Committee member asked about the auditing. The entity has to say exactly what they are spending the money on for the audit right.
- Finance Director Robinson stated on any money that we award to an outside agency, there is going to be documentation that they will have to provide in order for her to release any money to them. For example, if we are awarding \$1.2 million to a particular organization they may not get the \$1.2 all at one time because there will be documentation and proof that will be needed. There may be installment payments in this case.
- Administrator Hart asked to set a second date on May 12<sup>th</sup> or May 19<sup>th</sup>. Depending on what happens on April 28<sup>th</sup>, those dates would work for publication purposes. We need to make sure we have a quorum on the final vote.

- *Roger Peabody made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Duke seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meriwether. A vote was taken with both in favor.*

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on April 28, 2022.**